CIPHER

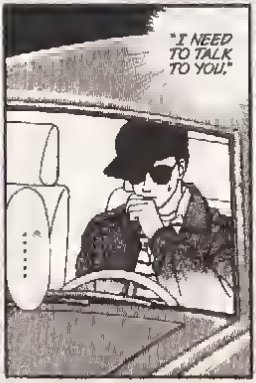
Volume 11

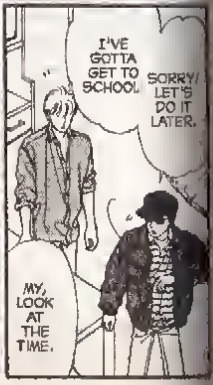
By Minako Narita

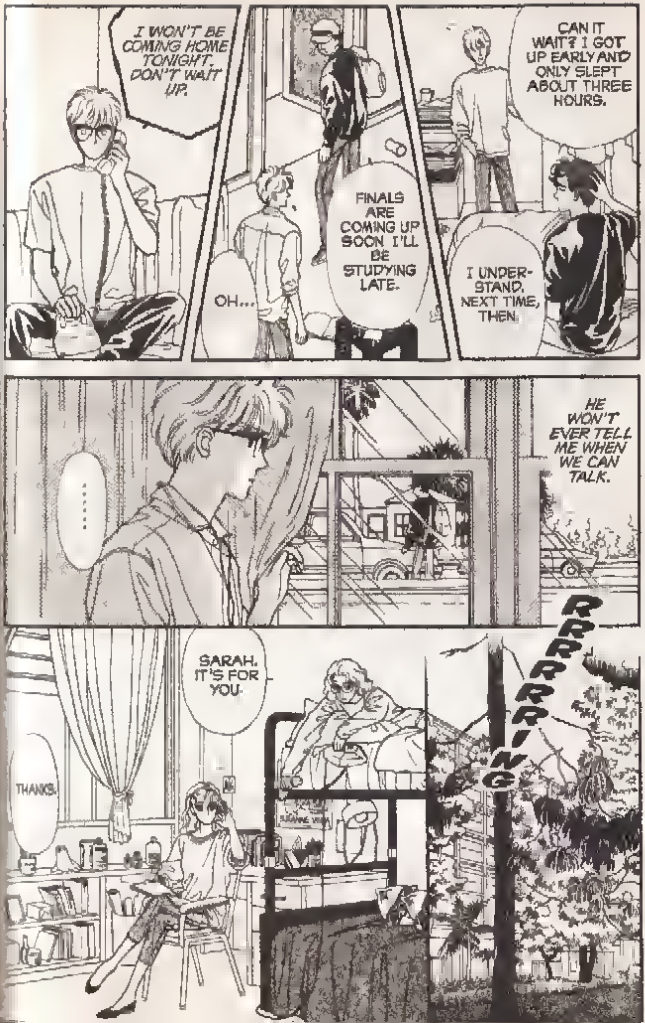
CREAK
...
CLICK
I'M HOME!
WH
AM
HI.
WELCOME BACK
WHERE'S THE GIRL? IS EVERYTHING GOING WELL, DUDE?
UH.
SHE WENT HOME THE NEXT DAY.
WENT HOME? ALREADY? TO NEW YORK?
YEAH. WE TALKED ALL NIGHT, AND CAME HOME LATE

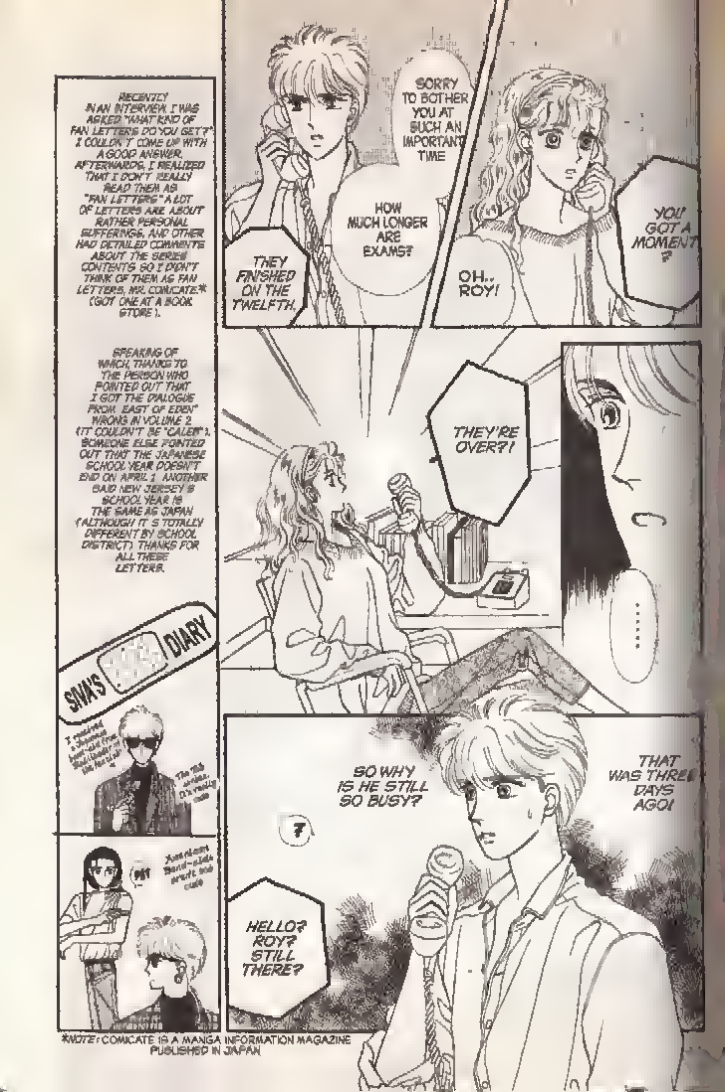
SO, HAL ...
TALKED
SHE REALLY WANTED TO MEET YOU, TOO.
SHE SAID "HI."
IS NOW OKAY ?
I NEED TO TALK TO YOU.

HAL! IS NOW OKAY ?


"I NEED TO TALK TO YOU."
.....

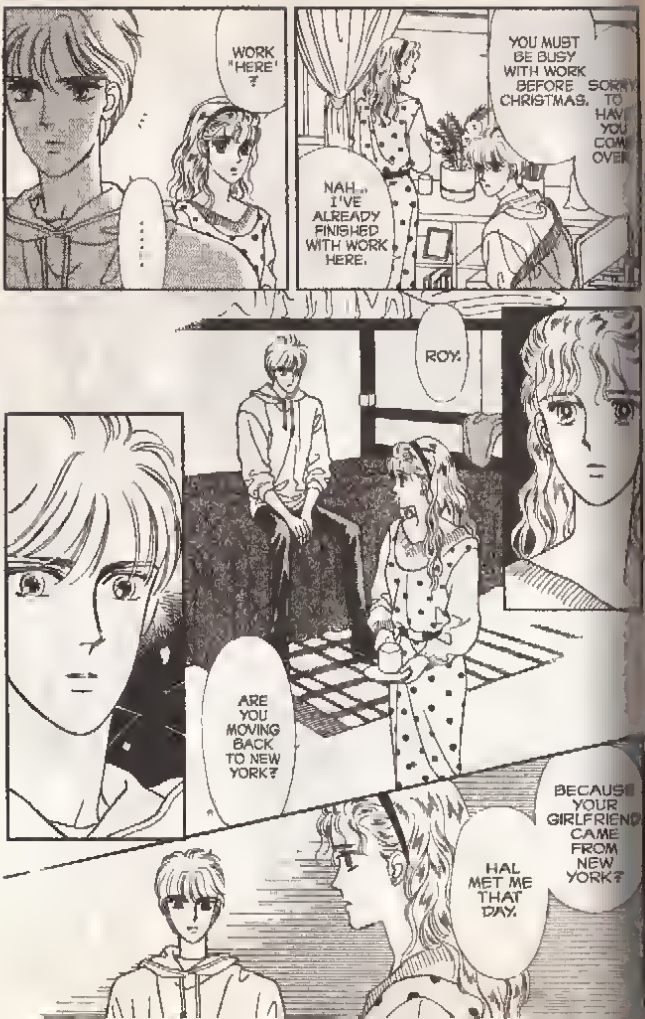

I'VE GOTTA GET TO SCHOOL.
SORRY! LET'S DO IT LATER.
MY, LOOK AT THE TIME.

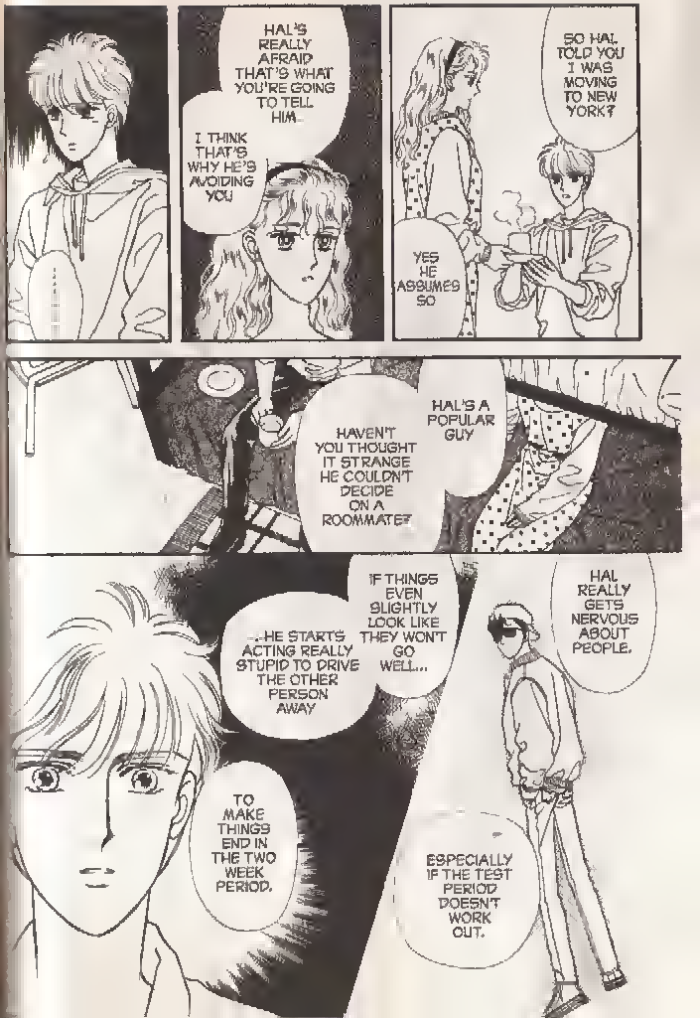

I WON'T BE COMING HOME TONIGHT. DON'T WAIT UP.
OH...
FINALS ARE COMING UP SOON I'LL BE STUDYING LATE.
I UNDER-STAND. NEXT TIME, THEN.
CAN IT WAIT? I GOT UP EARLY AND ONLY SLEPT ABOUT THREE HOURS.
.....
HE WON'T EVER TELL ME WHEN WE CAN TALK.
RRRRRRING
SARAH. IT'S FOR YOU.
THANKS.

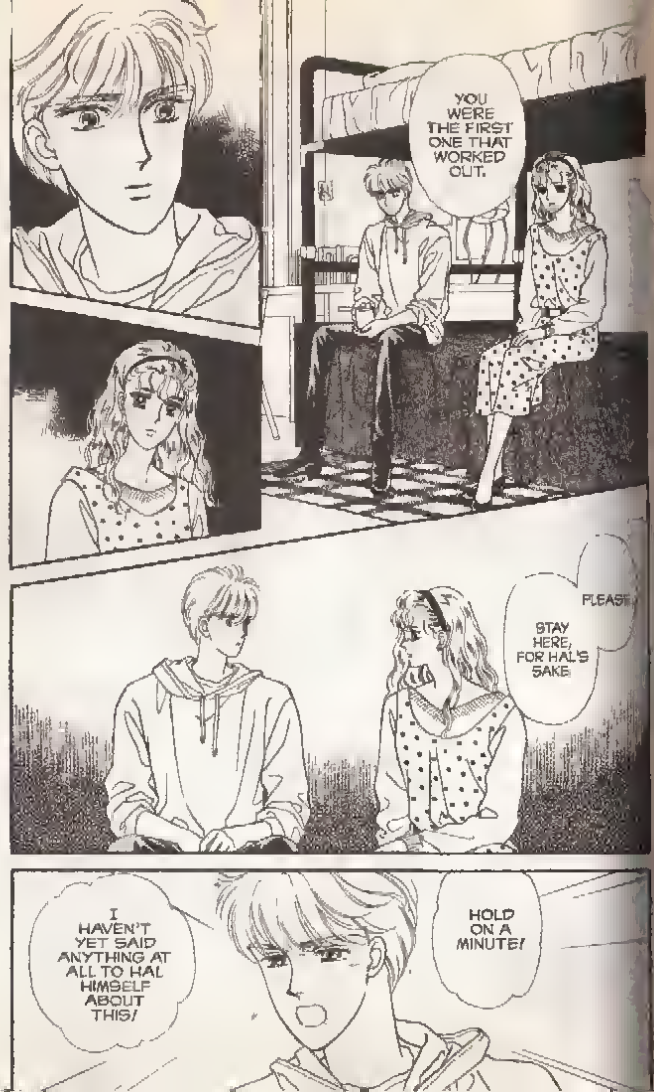

RECENTLY IN AN INTERVIEW I WAS ASKED "WHAT KIND OF FAN LETTERS DO YOU GET?" I COULDN'T COME UP WITH A GOOD ANSWER. AFTERWARDS, I REALIZED THAT I DON'T REALLY READ THEM AS "FAN LETTERS." A LOT OF LETTERS ARE ABOUT RATHER PERSONAL SUFFERINGS, AND OTHER HAD DETAILED COMMENTS ABOUT THE SERIES' CONTENTS. SO I DON'T THINK OF THEM AS FAN LETTERS. WE COMICATE.* (GOT ONE AT A BOOK STORE).
SPEAKING OF WHICH, THANKS TO THE PERSON WHO POINTED OUT THAT I GOT THE DIALOGUE FROM "EAST OF EDEN" WRONG IN VOLUME 2. ("IT COULDN'T BE 'CALEB'"). SOMEONE ELSE POINTED OUT THAT THE JAPANESE SCHOOL YEAR DOESN'T END ON APRIL 1. ANOTHER SAID NEW JERSEY'S SCHOOL YEAR IS THE SAME AS JAPAN (ALTHOUGH IT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT). THANKS FOR ALL THESE LETTERS.
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT TIME
HOW MUCH LONGER ARE EXAMS?
THEY FINISHED ON THE TWELFTH.
OH, ROY!
YOU GOT A MOMENT?
THEY'RE OVER?!
.....
SO WHY IS HE STILL SO BUSY?
THAT WAS THREE DAYS AGO!
HELLO? ROY? STILL THERE?
SHA'S DIARY
I received a Valentine from Mari Hada! Or the first of it.
The rest arrived... it's really cute.
Just when I heard—she's actually too cute

*NOTE: COMICATE IS A MANGA INFORMATION MAGAZINE PUBLISHED IN JAPAN

HAL?
UH..IS HAL'S SCHEDULE THE SAME AS YOURS?
HE SAID HE'S REALLY BUSY AT SCHOOL.
ROY.
CAN WE TALK IN PERSON?
KLANK


WORK "HERE"?
.....
NAH... I'VE ALREADY FINISHED WITH WORK HERE.
YOU MUST BE BUSY WITH WORK BEFORE CHRISTMAS. SORRY TO HAVE YOU COME OVER.
ROY.
ARE YOU MOVING BACK TO NEW YORK?
BECAUSE YOUR GIRLFRIEND CAME FROM NEW YORK?
HAL MET ME THAT DAY.

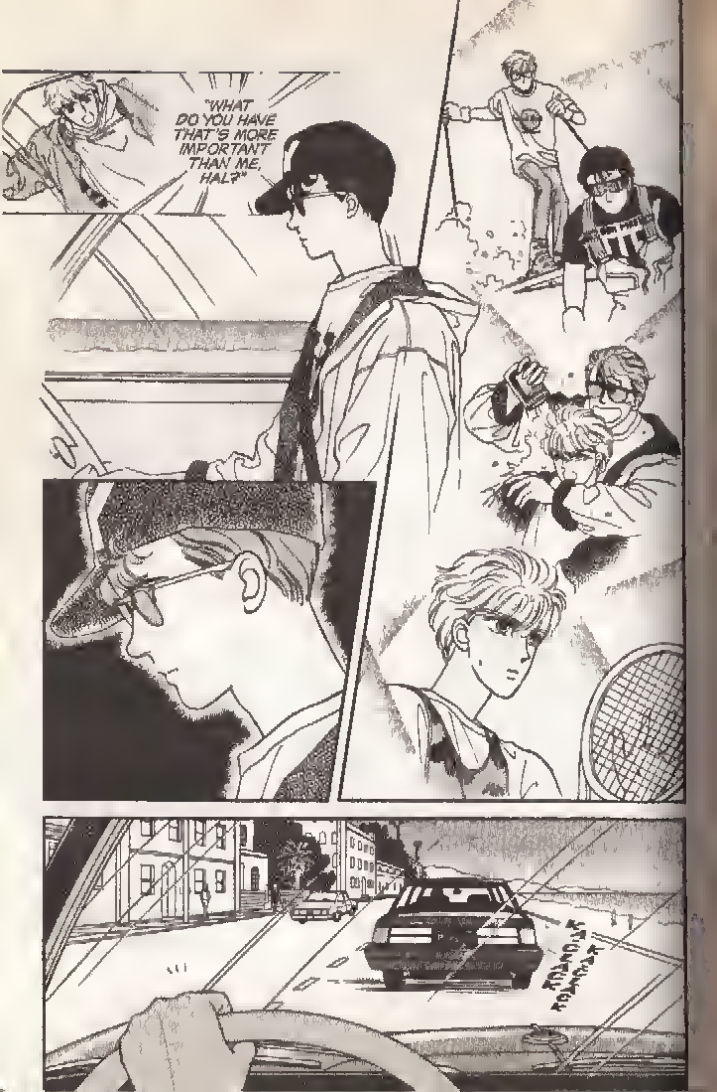

HAL'S REALLY AFRAID THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM...
I THINK THAT'S WHY HE'S AVOIDING YOU
SO HAL TOLD YOU I WAS MOVING TO NEW YORK?
YES HE ASSUMES SO
HAL'S A POPULAR GUY
HAVEN'T YOU THOUGHT IT STRANGE HE COULDN'T DECIDE ON A ROOMMATE?
HAL REALLY GETS NERVOUS ABOUT PEOPLE.
IF THINGS EVEN SLIGHTLY LOOK LIKE THEY WON'T GO WELL...
...HE STARTS ACTING REALLY STUPID TO DRIVE THE OTHER PERSON AWAY
TO MAKE THINGS END IN THE TWO WEEK PERIOD.
ESPECIALLY IF THE TEST PERIOD DOESN'T WORK OUT.


YOU WERE THE FIRST ONE THAT WORKED OUT.
PLEASE...
STAY HERE, FOR HAL'S SAKE
HOLD ON A MINUTE!
I HAVEN'T YET SAID ANYTHING AT ALL TO HAL HIMSELF ABOUT THIS!

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.
IT SOUNDS LIKE WE'LL NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.
IT'S PRECISELY BECAUSE I NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED THAT BEFORE THAT I....
THIS IS A PROBLEM BETWEEN HIM AND ME!
I'VE GOTTA TALK TO HAL!
HAL!
GAH!

LET'S DO IT NEXT TIME. I'VE GOTTA STUDY.
GLAD I CAUGHT YOU! I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, HAL
I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT, TOO.
UH.. SORRY. I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TAKE CARE OF.
YOU'VE ALWAYS GOTTA "STUDY."
WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME, HAL?!
HAL!
No way!
WAH..!
!
GAK

SCREECH
CRAP!
THAT'S EVEN WORSE THAN BREAKING UP WITH ME.
HE WOULDN'T EVEN LOOK ME IN THE FACE.
AM I SUPPOSED TO PUT UP WITH THIS?
"I'VE NEVER BEEN SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN."
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
HE'S STILL FOLLOWING ME.


"WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME, HAL?"
VROOM
KACHUNK

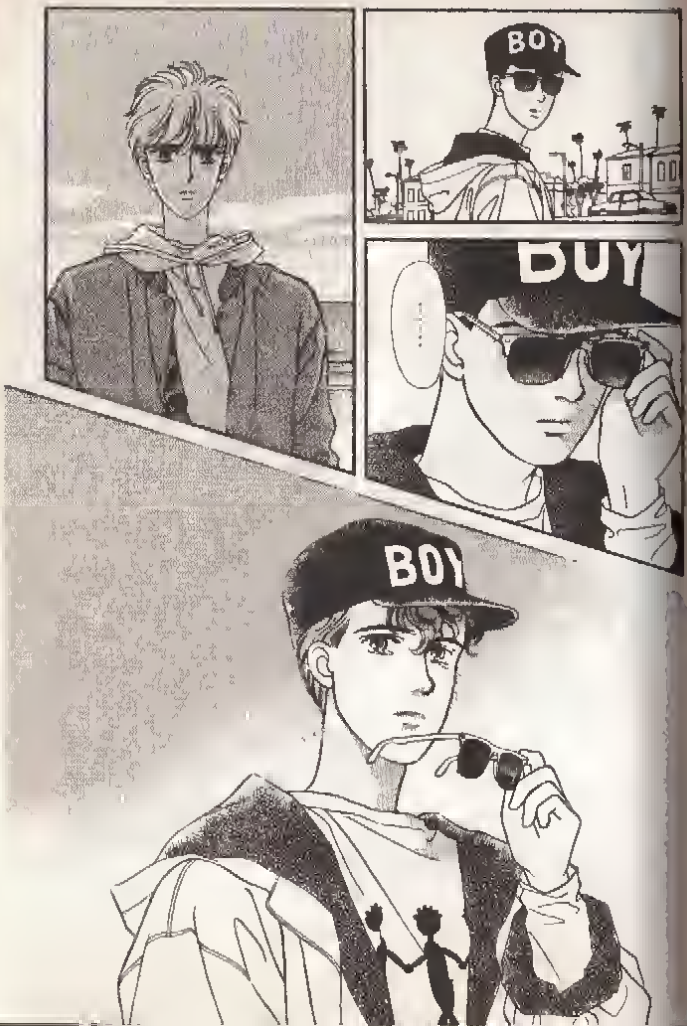
CHAK
KACHUNK
SLAM

BOY
.....
HEH HEH! SORRY I'VE BEEN RUNNING AWAY FROM YOU LIKE THAT!
HAL ...
SHA SHA?
HAL ...
IT'D BE A SHAME TO LEAVE HER ALL ALONE THERE, RIGHT?
I KNOW... YOU'RE MOVING BACK TO NEW YORK, RIGHT?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN ANY-THING.
STOP!
HAL
THE REASON I LEFT NEW YORK...
I'M GLAD THAT YOU FEEL LIKE GOING BACK. REALLY!
TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELF.
I COULD TELL RIGHT FROM THE START THAT YOU WERE ESCAPING NEW YORK
IF YOU WANT TO TALK, I'M HAPPY TO LISTEN.
BUT I UNDERSTAND YOU JUST AS YOU ARE NOW, SO THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH.
.....

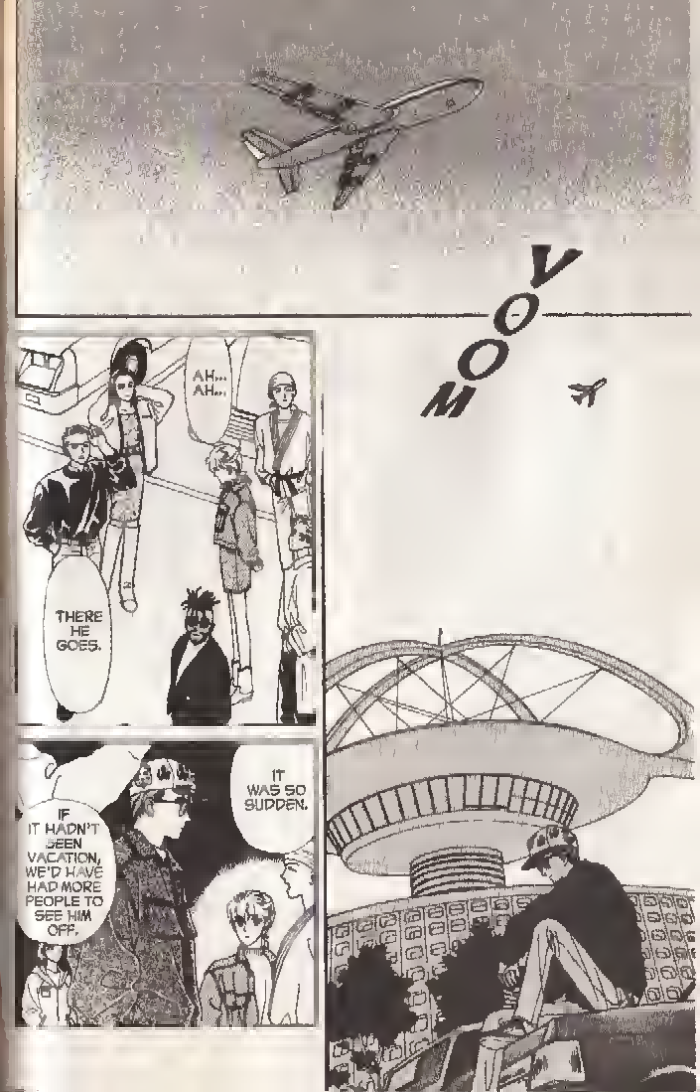
THANK YOU, HAL.
I'M... GOING.
BUT I THINK I'LL HAVE A LOT OF WORK IN L.A.
I'M SURE TO COME BACK OFTEN.
OH...
YEAH.
BC

WELL, GET IN TOUCH WHEN YOU'RE COMING BACK, OR IF YOU NEED HELP.
OKAY
I DUNNO ABOUT THAT... I MIGHT FIND A NEW ROOMMATE SOON.
I'D LIKE TO KEEP RENTING THE ROOM AT YOUR PLACE
AND FOR WHEN I COME BACK...
UH... THANKS.
IT'S MY FAULT YOU HAD TO STAY THIS LONG. I'LL USE MY DAD'S CONNECTIONS TO GET YOU A PLANE TICKET.
YOU WERE GOING TO DRIVE, RIGHT?
SHOW ME YOUR EYES.
TAKE OFF YOUR SUN-GLASSES, HAL.
HAL...
LET'S FIND MARK AND...
YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ANYBODY ELSE YET, HAVE YOU?
BOY


BOY
BOY
BOY

.....
I LOVE YOU, HAL!
JERK-WAD!
I WANTED TO BE COOL DURING THIS WHOLE THING.

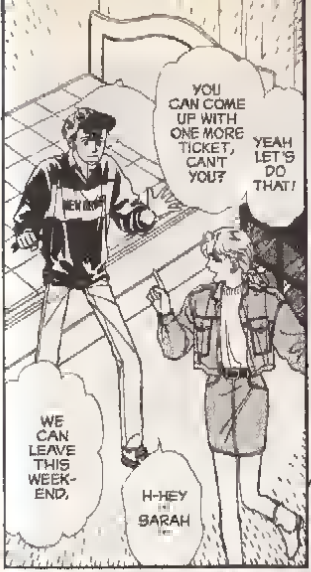
NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO TELL ME THAT.


AH... AH...
THERE HE GOES.
IT WAS SO SUDDEN.
IF IT HADN'T BEEN VACATION, WE'D HAVE HAD MORE PEOPLE TO SEE HIM OFF.
MOOV

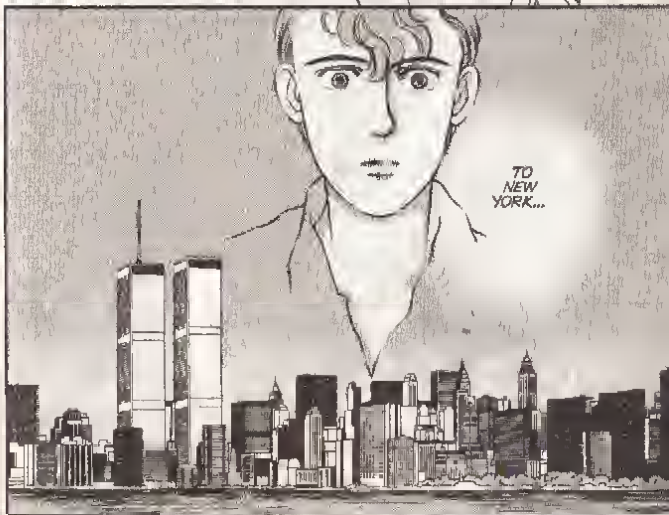
IS IT OKAY IF I GO WITH YOU?
GOING BACK TO SCHOOL? OR HOME?
HOME TO SLEEP
CREAK
SLAM

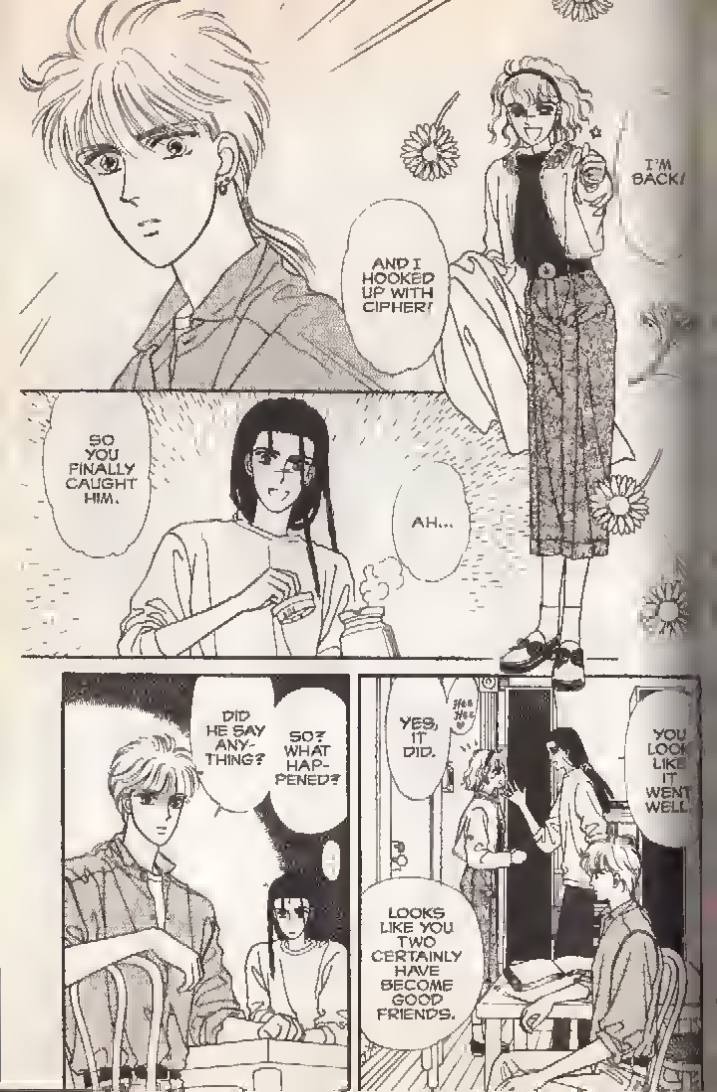
I HATE ROOMS THAT ARE ALL SO NEAT.
I'M GOING BACK TO NEW JERSEY FOR CHRISTMAS...
SHOULD I CHECK ON ROY?
HAL, I...
HEY.

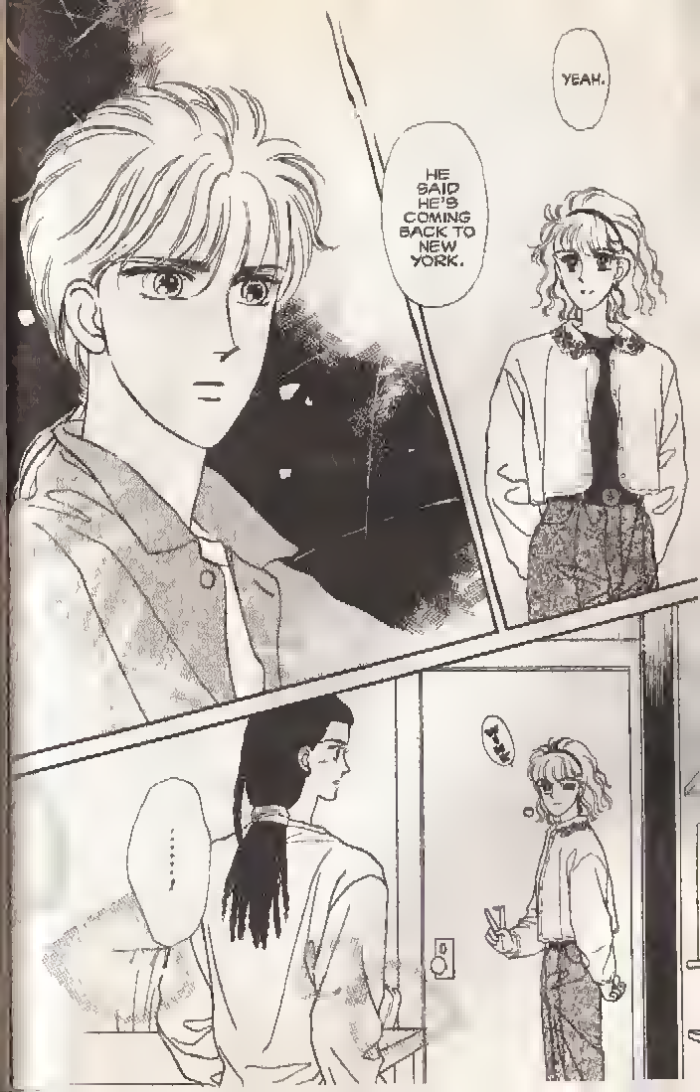
YOU'RE WORRIED, AREN'T YOU?
IF IT LOOKS LIKE THINGS AREN'T WORKING OUT FOR HIM IN NEW YORK, I CAN BRING HIM BACK HERE.
HUH?
NEW ORDER
DON'T BE A MORON!
...WHY SHOULD YOU GET TO GO SEE HIM? HUH?
IF ME, HIS BEST FRIEND, IS STUCK HERE
MAYBE YOU'RE SAYING ALL THIS FOR MY SAKE, BUT A WOMAN'S GOT NO PLACE BUTTING INTO STUFF LIKE THIS!
HE'LL BE FINE NO MATTER WHERE HE GOES!


YOU CAN COME UP WITH ONE MORE TICKET, CAN'T YOU?
YEAH LET'S DO THAT!
WE CAN LEAVE THIS WEEK-END.
H-HEY SARAH

LET'S GO TOGETH-ER.
ALL RIGHT, HAL
NEW ORDER


TO NEW YORK...


I'M BACK!
AND I HOOKED UP WITH CIPHER!
SO YOU FINALLY CAUGHT HIM.
AH...
SO? WHAT HAP-PENED?
DID HE SAY ANY-THING?
YES, IT DID.
YOU LOOK LIKE IT WENT WELL.
LOOKS LIKE YOU TWO CERTAINLY HAVE BECOME GOOD FRIENDS.


YEAH.
HE SAID HE'S COMING BACK TO NEW YORK.
.....
I-I...

I JUST DROPPED BY TO TELL YOU THE NEWS.
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, I'LL CONTACT YOU.
LEAVING ALREADY ?
WHAT... JEAN?
HE'S GOING TO GO SEE YOUR MOTHER.
HE'LL BE HERE BEFORE CHRIST-MAS
SHE LOOKED GOOD.
THINGS ARE WORKING OUT.
ROY'S COMING BACK

Scene 12: PREPARATION
The End